

Message Text

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47 50

ACTION CU-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8393

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 4380

FOR CU

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, NU

SUBJECT: VICE FOREIGN MINISTER BODAN AND NICARAGUAN FOREIGN POLICY

1. HARRY BODAN SHIELDS, VICE FOREIGN MINISTER SINCE JANUARY, HAS ACCEPTED AN INVITATION UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM (PROGRAM DATA SUBMITTED SEPTTEL) AND WILL COMMENCE A FOUR WEEK TOUR OF THE U.S. AROUND NOVEMBER 23. EMBASSY PERCEIVES VISIT AS PRIME OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS HAD LITTLE EXPOSURE TO U.S., BUT WHO IS PLAYING A KEY ROLE IN REASSESSING HIS COUNTRY'S FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH HAS BEEN TRADITIONALLY CLOSELY TIED TO OUR OWN. EMBASSY SUBMITS FOLLOWING BACKGROUND FOR DEPT'S ORIENTATION.

2. BODAN WITH BACKING FROM SECRETARY OF PRESIDENCY CARLOS DUBON AND TACHITO HAS BEEN SELECTED BY PRESIDENT SOMOZA AS HIS INSTRUMENT IN DISCOVERING NEW ALTERNATIVES IN NICARAGUAN FOREIGN POLICY. THIS EFFORT DERIVES FROM SOMOZA'S FEAR OF BEING POLITICALLY ISOLATED IF HE CONTINUES TO FOLLOW NICARAGUA'S TRADITIONAL PRO-US COURSE AND HIS CONSEQUENT DESIRE TO SEE WHETHER HE HAS ANY OPTIONS WHICH CAN LOWER NICARAGUA'S PROFILE AMONG ITS NEIGHBORS. DIFFERING REMARKABLY FROM THE TYPICAL SOMOCISTA FOREIGN POLICY ESTABLISHMENT PERSON IN HIS YOUTH, (33) EUROPEAN EDUCATION

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AND UNDERSTANDING OF THIRD WORLD MOVEMENTS, BODAN'S STRENGTHS

NEARLY COINCIDE WITH SOMOZA'S CONCERNS. THUS FAR THE NICARAGUAN FOREIGN POLICY REASSESSMENT PRESAGED BY BODAN'S ARRIVAL HAS NOT PROCEEDED VERY FAR, REMAINING LATENT RATHER THAN ACTUAL. APART FROM THE VISIT OF A NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION LAST APRIL AND SOME PRIDE ENHANCING HESITATION BEFORE COMMITTING ITSELF TO SUPPORT U.S. INITIATIVES IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, NICARAGUA HAS NOT MANIFESTED ANY SIGNIFICANT DEVIATION IN FOREIGN POLICY. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE AWARE OF A TUG-OF-WAR NOW IN PROGRESS BETWEEN BODAN AND HIS ALLIES AND THE OLDER, MORE CONSERVATIVE,

GENERATION LED BY AMBASSADOR TO U.S. SEVILLA-SACASA AND AMBASSADOR TO UN GUILLERMO LANG, AS TO THE DEGREE WHICH NICARAGUA CAN OR SHOULD BECOME PART OF THE THIRD WORLD RABBLE.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER MONTIEL SEEMS TO BE LEFT IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL OF THIS. PRIMARILY A LEGAL EXPERT, MONTIEL HAS SUBSUMED ANY EGO OF HIS OWN IN FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS BY ASSIDUOUSLY CARRYING OUT SOMOZA'S WISHES WITH ALACRITY AND WITH CONSIDERABLE DIGNITY. AFTER SOME INITIAL FRICTION AND SUSPICION, MONTIEL AND BODAN HAVE COME TO FUNCTION SURPRISINGLY WELL AS A TEAM. MONTIEL DOES NOT SEEM TO RESENT BODAN AND EVEN APPEARS TO WELCOME HIM INTO MEETINGS AND DEBATES WHEN HE COULD BE EXCLUDED WITHOUT FUSS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER OFTEN DEFERS TO HIS YOUNGER SUBORDINATE, APPARENTLY ACKNOWLEDGING HIS GREATER EXPERTISE, ESPECIALLY IN NONHEMISPHERIC MATTERS, AND HIS ABILITY TO ELOQUENTLY ARTICULATE THE MOST COMPLICATED ISSUES.

4. BODAN'S WEIGHT HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY FELT ALSO IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WHERE HE HAS SUCCESSFULLY ESTABLISHED A NEW DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, DOUBLED THE NUMBER OF SUBSTANTIVE PERSONNEL IN THE MINISTRY AND OVERSEEN THE PRODUCTION OF SOME NEARLY PROFESSIONAL POLICY PAPERS. HE HAS DONE MUCH TO REVITALIZE THE MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND SENSITIZE IT TO NEW HORIZONS.

5. ALL OF THIS INDICATES THAT BODAN IS FULFILLING THE PROMISE THAT SOMOZA ORIGINALLY SAW IN HIM AND IS CONFIDENTLY CARVING OUT A STRONG NICHE OF INFLUENCE WITHIN THE BUREAUCRACY. IF HE DOES NOT FALL TO THE ARROWS WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO BE SHOT
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AT HIM BY THE OLD GUARD, HE SHOULD BE A MAJOR FACTOR IN NICARAGUAN FOREIGN POLICY FOR YEARS TO COME. ACCEPTING THIS, THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN CONCERNED FOR SOME TIME THAT BODAN'S EXPOSURE TO THE U.S. HAS BEEN SO THIN. BECAUSE OF THE PREDOMINANT POSITION ENJOYED BY THE U.S. HERE, THERE IS EVERY DANGER THAT BODAN'S IMPLIED MISSION OF FINDING NEW PATHS MAY COME IN CONFLICT WITH OUR OWN INTERESTS AT VARIOUS INTERSECTIONS. FORTUNATELY, WE DO NOT FIND HIM BASICALLY ILL-

DISPOSED TOWARD THE U.S. (INDEED, HE TAKES SOME PRIDE IN THE FACT THAT HIS MOTHER IS A U.S. CITIZEN), BUT NEITHER HAS HE GONE OUT OF THE WAY FOR US AS MUCH AS WE HAVE GROWN ACCUSTOMED.

6. WE HOPE THAT HIS VISIT TO THE U.S. WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN BOTH THE PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL SIDES. ALTHOUGH HE IS FROM A SMALL COUNTRY, WE EXPECT THAT NICARAGUA'S ALMOST IMPECCABLE RECORD IN INTERNATIONAL FORA FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW (MOST RECENTLY ON KOREA AND ANTI-ZIONISM) COMBINED WITH BODAN'S PRESTIGIOUS POSITION WILL ALLOW HIM TO BE PROGRAMMED IMAGINATIVELY AND AT APPROPRIATE LEVELS.
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